



## Testimony Supporting S.B. Bill 761

March 18, 2021

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Ranking Members Sampson and France, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I, Emily Hoyle, am a representative of the Connecticut Women's Consortium and a resident of New Haven. Today I am writing to urge you to support Committee Bill-761: *An act permitting the use of citizens' election program grant funds to offset a participating candidate's childcare costs*. For decades, the Consortium team has worked to provide high-quality, gender-responsive behavioral education to Connecticut's therapists, social workers, and clinicians. Our journey has helped us to understand the cruciality of gender equity and has inspired us as advocates for women, children, LGBTQ individuals, and the organizations that affect them.

2.5 million women in the United States have left the work force since the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> This sudden and devastating decrease was triggered in part by the disproportionate growth in domestic and childcare responsibilities placed on women's shoulders in the last year. This acute instance is well documented, but its severity is indicative of a larger disproportionality that existed before 2020. Despite huge gains in women's empowerment, childcare costs remain a major barrier to working mothers seeking to enhance their careers.<sup>2</sup>

This crisis was encapsulated perfectly in Caitlin Clarkson Pereira's 2018 campaign for state representative. Pereira was denied use of funds from the Citizen's Action Fund Grant Program to pay for childcare for her then 3-year-old daughter.<sup>3</sup> As a young mother, this repudiation cost Pereira's campaign dearly and limited her chance of success. This denial has since been amended by

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers, K (2021 Feb. 18) *2.5 Million Women Left the Work Force During the Pandemic. Harris Sees a 'National Emergency.'* The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/us/politics/women-pandemic-harris.html>

<sup>2</sup> Schochet, L. (2019, March 28). *The Child Care Crisis Is Keeping Women Out of the Workforce*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/03/28/467488/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

<sup>3</sup> Munson, E. (2020, Aug. 28) *Connecticut judge: Public campaign grants can pay for childcare*. The New Haven Register. <https://www.nhregister.com/politics/article/Connecticut-judge-Public-campaign-grants-can-pay-15521123.php>

a ruling from Superior Court Judge John L. Cordani; however, the onerous remains on the Connecticut State Legislature to condemn this form of discrimination.

The Connecticut Women's Consortium supports S.B. No. 761 and its importance for aspirational parents across the state. Here, we have an opportunity to empower parents to achieve their career and political goals and to lift up those who seek to better represent Connecticut's working families. Let this Bill create a precedent for Connecticut's dedication to ending the gender gap and promoting women out of professional obscurity.